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THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MRS MACQUOID.

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AUTHOR OF 'THE COLONEL'S PLAN,' &c.

I.

'Do you think he is come for that?' said Jane.

'He shut the door carefully,' answered Bella; then, finding that small fact weak to support a case on, she bolstered it up a little.—'I am sure that he only asked for Katie, or Anne would have been to fetch us. She has gone back into the kitchen. But to me the way that door was shut is most convincing. It was not Anne—she was gone before I heard it; and she never closes it like that, turning the handle round. There must have been a reason.'

'It is lucky we had finished dusting,' said Jane; 'and I am pleased that I put William's photograph in the box. It was getting faded, and, I am sure, ought to be removed.'

There was a deeper meaning than might be thought in those prudent words. William had been Katie's first husband, and his likeness had occupied a prominent spot on the drawing-room wall; it was just as well that it should not stare blightingly down on Katie's second prospects. So her sisters thought.

Katie was the only one of the family who had married. Jane and Bella remained under their brother's roof, keeping house for him, and darning his heather-mixture stockings; that roof was an old and honourable one, if dilapidated, and kept up its dignity on the moors, as became the lone mansion of an impoverished Highland gentleman. The house was big and cold without; inside it was barer and colder. James—called The Laird by three crofters in the glen—did not seem sure that the world held anything but books, and did not care to discover. His sisters grew rather like the gray, outside walls; they were elderly and thin, and their tempers were like their noses—sharp.

When Katie came back to her brother's house, a penniless widow, she was like a butterfly alighting where the heather is black and burnt; there was no finding the place she had fluttered out of. They were all older, and the house was grimmer. The others' clothes hung stiffly on all the pegs, and there was no spare bed but the visitor's four-poster with its faint smell of lavender. Her coming gave an extra room to clean, and made some difference in the accounts. She had in truth no welcome.

The two elder unmarried sisters were not ill-pleased to have John Macquoid riding up from Auchendrane, making hoof-marks on the soft bog-road, where there were so few. Katie's ways were not their ways, and they would not be sorry to have the house to themselves, and to put the spare bedroom, now littered with Katie's vanities, into its former state of empty expectation. Only this hope induced them to be tolerant of Katie. It was very fortunate that she should look so nice in her small black bonnets, more so that John Macquoid should think it. The house was square, and had windows in all directions, but one could not put his head out of any window without seeing, right up to the hills and mists, the land that was the property of John Macquoid.

It would be a better match for Katie than the first, which had sent her home—if this were home—so poor. The sisters were now sitting up in the cold, with no intention of coming down, because John Macquoid's face, as seen through the staircase window, had worn an important look.

Katie had reason to be glad, and they had reason to be thankful.

'I do hope she will see it in the proper light,' said Bella. 'But I never understood her; she is so uncertain. Do you think she could possibly'—

Jane interrupted her. She was not eager to suppose that Katie could be so foolish, but she was very much afraid.

'It is a great compliment, and the best thing that could happen. It is not likely that she will be so imprudent.'

'Oh dear no. But very probable!'

They started: the door was opened wider, and Katie walked straight in.

She was a young thing, this widow; so small, and bright, and hasty, that it was a good while before one understood that her eyes were steadfast. The hair was very fluffy round her face, and her hands helped a great deal when she was talking. One would call her excitable and be nearly right—and yet know very little of her. Just as she walked in, her cheeks were red, which they were not always.

'It was thoughtful of you to take William out of his frame,' she said sharply. 'Did you know that Mr Macquoid was coming to—speak to me? How very anxious you must be to hear about it.'

This was Katie's provoking mood. The elder sisters gasped, and looked at each other blankly.

'You would very much like to know,' proceeded Katie, 'whether I courtesied and said I was much obliged to him, but I did not intend to marry; or whether I dropped a lower courtesy and told him I would make him—miserable. Which do you think?'

They gulped down their alarm, but did not attempt to guess.

'I am sorry you did not see him go,' Katie said, more slowly. 'If you had known, you could have inspected the back of his head as he walked down to the gate, and you might have found out from it how he felt. Is it not a pity that I knew you were listening for the door, and to disappoint you, let him out by the window?'

She had given herself away, and she saw it in their relief. The window was long and low, but for all that surely if John Macquoid had not felt much uplifted, he would scarcely have quitted the house in such a light-hearted fashion.

'We were sure you would consider James—and the advisability'—began both sisters, with a haste that showed much of their past anxiety.

'Oh, you were sure!' cried Katie bitterly. 'You said: "She must see that James does not want her, and we will not have her here for ever: we have made it quite plain that she is an interloper and must settle herself elsewhere." You have told me very often how rich John Macquoid is, and—and all the rest of it. All the time he was speaking to me I felt that you were sitting above and whispering, calculating whether I would answer to please you or to please myself. I thought of you, and of what you would believe if I spoke as I would like—and it nearly drove me wild. But I hope you are satisfied. I answered, "Yes."'

There was a noise in the passage down

below. John Macquoid had come back, by way of the door, to fetch his stick.

Katie was going to cry. She would not break down and do it before the sisters, who looked too pleased at that yes of hers to care about anything else, or even to be offended; so she choked down the first sob, and rushed across the landing to her own room, slamming the door in a way that made James jump in his study, and reflect that his third sister was a trial in a quiet house.

Left by themselves, Bella and Jane drew long breaths of satisfaction, and began to talk about the wedding. Katie would have to be married from there, and the house was all too shabby. Fortunately John Macquoid had no relations; the guests could all be packed judiciously in the drawing-room—which was presentable—if they kept their elbows in.

So they conversed, and settled all that was required, while Katie crushed her face into the pillows of the big four-poster that would soon be empty, and cried late into the afternoon.

'I am glad it is a boy,' said John Macquoid, bending over something very small and ugly. There was a sister of Katie's in the room, and she pricked up her ears.

'Because of the entail?' said she.

Katie did not say anything. She thought that ugly bundle beautiful, and therefore her opinion on any subject was not worth much. She smiled a little upon her husband, and a great deal more upon the baby.

They had been married a year, and had got on comfortably, though John Macquoid was not demonstrative, and was perhaps a little too quiet for Katie—as her sisters thought.

'She is too flighty,' Bella would say, now and then, missing in her the proper dignity of a big proprietor's wife, or feeling offended at some slight neglect—Auchendrane was too near for perfect peace. When the baby came she added to the phrase: 'Too flighty to make a careful mother.'

But Bella was wrong in that. If she supposed that they would have to play the part of watchful aunts, saving the baby from its mother's carelessness, and superintending its early growth, she was mistaken.

'I have had another husband, but I have never had another child,' Katie said once; at which remark the aunts were shocked and sorry for John, deciding that the mother was extravagantly fond of little Johnnie. There was always something to find fault about in Katie.

'You are too much taken up with the boy,' said Bella, when Johnnie was two years old. 'He should come second, you must remember.'

Katie shook her fluffy head—as a warrior might his crest.

'Second to what? Oh, I know how you used to praise Auchendrane until I took it. Am I not kind enough to the property?'

She could not forget the line they had taken, and it made her voice sound bitter, when she found biting things to say.

'I am sorry for John,' said Bella, when they sat talking her over, as they did after every visit.

'She speaks as she does to tease us,' said

Jane. 'If she had not been very fond of him, she would have refused him for the sake of vexing us.' Bella was the sharp one of the two, but Jane was as often right.

The sisters were sitting at their window one afternoon. It was a most convenient window, looking out on the approach and commanding a fair long strip of road. A person sitting there could get half a mile's notice of any visitor, and prepare accordingly, which was an inducement to patronise the view.

Just now it was dull, Katie and John and Johnnie were in London, the big house at Auchendrane was empty, and no dogcarts whisked along the moor-road from Dalloch. It was not the shooting season.

'What is that?' asked Bella.

There was a speck on the far brown road, that grew and widened into a person riding.

'It will be somebody for James,' suggested Jane, peering out and drawing in her head regretfully. 'We need not change our dresses.'

'No,' said Bella getting up nevertheless. She must step down and see if James's room were tidy. Then she took another look and gasped:

'A telegraph boy from Dalloch!'

The messenger drew up after his ten-mile ride, and began to unlatch the gate, but before he could do it the two women ran flopping down the path and confronted him.

'What is it?' they cried, both breathless. He gave them the telegram. But people who are not used to such treat them as bombs and dare not open them; it was so with Jane and Bella, and they carried it in to James, because both were afraid to look.

It was a while before they found him; at last the tapping of a hammer helped them, and he was discovered at the back, mending the hen-house in a gentlemanly—that is to say, slow and unskillful—fashion.

'A telegram!' they gasped, holding out the buff envelope that frightened them so much. 'Open it.—Who is dead?'

James tore it open. Their nervousness affected him.

"Katie has disappeared. Is she with you?—
MACQUOID."

WORKING IN THE DARK.

Most manufacturers will tell us that the first essential in a workshop is a good light and plenty of it; for one can hardly expect men to turn out well-finished goods unless this desideratum is secured. But there is one particular industry from which light is most jealously guarded, and in the workshops of which the sun's rays are never permitted to intrude, except on the rare occasions when a 'general clean-up' of the premises becomes necessary. The place referred to is the factory where photographic dry plates are made, many thousands of which are used daily by professional and amateur workers all the world over.

Amateur photography is now such a common pastime that it is hardly necessary to describe the appearance of one of these plates, but for the benefit of the uninitiated we may say that it consists of a sheet of glass, covered with a horny

coating of gelatine which appears to be mixed with some cream-coloured pigment. This coating is sensitive to white light, and the image of any object formed by a lens upon its surface is rendered visible by the operation called development. The plates may however be handled with impunity in a deep red light; and it is fortunate that this should be the case, for were it otherwise photography would be impossible. A plate factory therefore is lighted by lamps, preferably electric, which are enclosed in lanterns of deep-red glass, and the light is so dim and insufficient for all ordinary purposes that the phrase 'working in the dark' may with fairness be applied to this industry.

The manufacture of dry plates dates back only a few years, the wet plate—which it was necessary for the photographer himself to prepare at the time of using—being employed almost universally up to the year 1880. Long before this time there were certain enthusiastic amateur experimentalists who believed in and made dry plates, of which the basis is gelatine, for their own use. But the professional photographer was conservative, and preferred to stick to the old methods. At length, however, his attention was suddenly arrested by the wonderful rapidity with which pictures could be taken on dry plates, and almost reluctantly he was converted to the new system. After this revolution in photography took place, a new industry was created in the manufacture of dry plates, and many factories were established. It is satisfactory to note that at many of these establishments the export is nearly equal to the home trade, English dry plates being famous all the world over as the most reliable made.

At most of the dry-plate factories admission to strangers is courteously but firmly refused, and, unless there is some very good reason why an exception should be made in his favour, it is impossible for a visitor to find entrance.

The writer of the present article was fortunate enough to carry with him such credentials as at once to mollify the hearts of those in authority, not only at one, but at several factories, and he is therefore in a position to give an exhaustive account of this work done in the dark. But from exigencies of space, as well as in fairness to those who desire secrecy for special methods, his remarks on the various stages of the manufacture must be brief.

The first room which opens its doors to us is fully lighted by big windows, which are opposite a long bench at which several girls are at work cleaning the glass as it comes from the glass merchants. We learn that at one particular factory the glass supplied, cut into sheets of assorted sizes, involves a bill of between two and three hundred pounds per month. At some factories the glass is cleaned by machine, being fed into it sheet by sheet by the aid of revolving india-rubber rollers, and receiving a good scrubbing with acid water from rapidly moving brushes. In either case the glass after being cleaned is placed in racks to dry, when it is ready to receive its light-sensitive chemical coating of gelatine emulsion.

The next apartment which we enter is the laboratory, where this emulsion is prepared, many gallons at a time; and on entering the double doors—one of which must be closed before the

other is opened, so as to avoid any glint of white light—we leave the day behind us, and enter upon a darkness which may be felt. But gradually, as the pupils of the eyes become expanded and accustomed to the gloom, we find that we can dimly trace the outline of red lamps. By-and-by these lamps look far brighter than they did at first; we can sufficiently perceive objects to avoid knocking against them, and in another few minutes we are almost comfortable with regard to our powers of observation in this gloomy place. We can see many bottles on a shelf above our heads, and various big pots around us: the bottles contain the chemicals of which the emulsion is made, and the pots are the vessels in which it is compounded. And now our guide gives us a short lesson in photographic chemistry. A warm solution of gelatine and water is charged with a certain quantity of bromide of potash, or ammonium. In another vessel is held a solution of nitrate of silver in water; and when these two mixtures are gradually combined with one another, with much stirring, a cream-coloured emulsion of bromide of silver—intensely sensitive to light—is the result. After this important mixing operation takes place, the compound is kept at a certain temperature to ripen, and is then cooled down to the jelly form, when it assumes the appearance, barring its yellow tint, of blanc-mange. This jelly has now to be washed in order to get rid of certain soluble salts which are not wanted, and which have been formed as necessary by-products of the mixing process. And in order that the washing water shall have free access to the compound, the jelly is pressed through a silver colander or sieve—some makers use coarse canvas—and comes out of the ordeal like so much vermicelli. After a good washing in running water for an hour or so, the strings of jelly are strained, heated up into liquid form once more, carefully filtered through swansdown calico, and the compound is then ready for coating the glass plates.

When dry plates first became a marketable commodity the plates were coated by hand, each one having a pool of emulsion poured in its centre, and gradually urged over its surface by a glass rod, the plate being afterwards placed on a flat, cold surface of slate to set. But ingenious machines were soon constructed to do the work far more rapidly and with greater uniformity, and machine coating is now the rule at all factories. There are two or three different machines, but they have all a family likeness, and differ only in detail; a description of one will therefore suffice for all. The warm emulsion is poured into a reservoir holding perhaps a couple of gallons, and from this receptacle it flows to a trough in which revolves a glass roller about the size of an ordinary kitchen rolling-pin. This trough and its roller are placed across a long narrow table which forms the bed of the machine. The roller as it revolves takes up a certain quantity of the emulsion, which at this stage of its career looks like, and is about the consistency of custard. A silver scraper just touches the wet roller, and from the scraper a linen apron depends which carries an even layer of the liquid emulsion to the glass plates which, by means of endless bands, travel in procession upon the level surface of the table. Boys, almost unseen in this dim

light, are continually supplying plates of glass to the machine, and other boys, twenty-five feet away at the other end of the table, remove the coated plates as they one by one present themselves. In their journey the coated plates travel through a tunnel which is chilled with ice, so that the gelatinous mixture becomes firmly set, and the plates can be reared in portable racks without injury. As each rack is filled with plates it is put on a lift and taken up-stairs to the drying-room, where, by the combined help of steam-pipes and fans, the film of sensitised gelatine is rendered perfectly dry in about twenty-four hours.

The dry plates in common use by professional and amateur photographers vary in size between 15 by 12 inches and $4\frac{1}{2}$ by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the cameras and other apparatus being made of standard gauge, and the plates being made to fit them. Unfortunately the foreign sizes are different, so that for export—unless it be to India or one of our own colonies—the plates must be made specially. It is not usual, however, to coat a smaller plate than that known as whole-plate—that is, $8\frac{1}{2}$ by $6\frac{1}{2}$; and to meet the large demand for smaller sizes—especially $4\frac{1}{2}$ by $3\frac{1}{4}$ —this whole-plate is cut across twice by an automatic machine—the last-named size being known as quarter plate, and used more extensively than any other.

We next enter the packing-room. It is customary to pack the plates in dozens, each dozen in a separate cardboard box; but before this is done each plate is held up to a red lamp and well examined for blemishes. A scratch or a bubble will at once condemn it, and it is placed aside for after-treatment. The work is so well done that the spoilt plates are less than one per cent. of the whole, a wonderful result to arrive at considering that the plate, while its coating is wet, is a very ticklish thing to handle, and also considering the paucity of light used to work by in its preparation. The plates are usually packed face to face in fours—each four being wrapped in chemically pure paper. Thus each cardboard box holds three packages, and the lid is secured by the printed label which is pasted over all. When once boxed up the plates can be handled in white light with impunity; but of course when the user places them in his apparatus he must carefully protect them from white light.

A rival to glass as a support for the emulsion has recently been introduced, and what are known as celluloid films are coming into common use, especially among tourist photographers. These films are about one-sixth the weight of glass plates, and therefore commend themselves to travellers to whom every extra ounce of luggage is a serious consideration. Celluloid is a horny, flexible, and transparent substance, which is made for photographic purposes in two forms, either in flat sheets, cut like the glass plates already adverted to, into standard sizes, or in the form of a long ribbon which can by means of rollers be exposed in the camera to the influence of the lens, a length at a time. Such a ribbon impressed with as many as fifty pictures can afterwards be cut up into convenient lengths for ease of development. It may also be mentioned that this same ribbon-like material, technically known as rollable film, is used in the apparatus for projecting upon a screen what are known as 'living pictures.' In this apparatus several hundreds of pictures are used

per minute, the combination of the whole giving the effect of movement, as in the Zoetrope and other older contrivances. The pictures for Edison's Kinetoscope are also of the same nature, and take this same form.

It will be seen that the coating of these plates and films for photographic purposes is now a very important business, and the calls upon the manufacturer seem to increase rather than diminish. For even if it be true that the present craze for cycling has reduced the number of amateur photographers, fresh uses for light-sensitive material are constantly coming forward. It is curious to note that the beautiful art in which brilliant light is one of the first essentials, is bred, as it were, in a darkness which is almost that of night. And it might seem that for the operators this condition of working is very hard. But it is certain that they soon become accustomed to the gloom, and some there are who consider that the eyesight receives a rest thereby, which will happily postpone the use of spectacles for several years beyond the usual age when such helps to vision become indispensable.

THE FASCINATION OF THE KING.

By GUY BOOTHBY.

CHAPTER XII.—A FATEFUL NIGHT.

THE sun was high in the heavens next morning when I woke from my heavy sleep; but late as it was, I believe, had circumstances permitted it, I could have rolled over and continued my slumber for another five hours without waking. Whether it was on account of my two long rides, or whether it was my fall upon the battlefield that had done it, I cannot say; one thing, however, was quite certain, I ached in every limb as if I had been beaten with bludgeons from head to foot. When I crawled from my bed I was as pitiable a wreck as a man could well be. With the exercise of considerable patience, however, I managed to dress myself, and then went off to find the doctor in order to discover what sort of report he could give me of the king's condition. I caught him in the act of leaving the bedroom after his mid-day examination of his patient. He held up his finger to warn me not to speak, and then led me down the corridor as far as the Fountain Courtyard. Here he stopped, and we sat down together on the seat by the water.

'I took the liberty of looking in upon you about eight o'clock this morning, my lord,' he said, 'but you were sleeping so soundly that I thought it would be a pity to wake you. I knew you would like to be told at once that there is a slight change for the better in His Majesty's condition. He is sensible once more, and his temperature has dropped considerably since I saw you early this morning.'

'Thank God for His mercy!' I said from the very bottom of my heart. 'Your news makes a different man of me. Heaven grant the improvement may continue! You think more hope-

fully of the case now than when I last saw you?'

'I trust we may *soon* have reason to think more hopefully of it,' he answered cautiously. 'But so far the improvement is so very, very slight that I should not be justified in being too sanguine. He is up now; he may be down again in half-an-hour; so that you must not build too much on what I tell you. There is one thing, however, of which I *will* assure you, if it will afford you any satisfaction, and that is that if doctoring and nursing can do it, he will be saved. I can say no more.'

'You have said quite enough,' I answered, taking his hand and gripping it in mine. 'You have given us good proof of your devotion, and you know, I think, that we have the greatest possible confidence in you. By the way, who is with the king now?'

'His wife. She has just relieved me.'

'Have you comforted her with your good news?'

'I have told her just what I have told you,' he answered. 'I think it has done her good. She wanted a fillip badly. This morning early she broke down completely, and if it had not been for the Princess, I don't know what I should have done with her.'

'God be merciful to her in her hour of trouble!'

I said, and as I did so he rose. We shook hands, and then he went his way back to the sick-room, while I went mine across the courtyard to the barracks in search of Prennan.

I found him in his quarters putting the finishing touches to his arrangements for the coming expedition. He rose when I entered, and shook me warmly by the hand, at the same time complimenting me upon my improved appearance. In return I questioned him as to his preparations for the surprise we proposed springing upon the enemy.

'Everything is in readiness,' he answered. 'Du Berg will receive his despatches, all being well, in an hour's time, and will be certain to march to the rendezvous forthwith. There remains, therefore, only one matter to be settled.'

'And what is that?' I inquired. 'We must leave nothing undecided, for when all is said and done we are playing our game against overwhelming odds.'

'It is the question as to who shall lead the expedition to-night,' he answered. 'I should like to do so myself above all things, but His Majesty has intrusted the command of the citadel to me; and if by any chance what we hope to do to-night were to fall through, and the enemy were to seize the castle during my absence, I should have failed in my trust, and should be disgraced for ever.'

'Why should I not take command?' I asked. 'It is true I am not much of a soldier, but in this case I think I could do all that would be required of me. At any rate I could try. And I think my devotion to the king is beyond question.'

'That is exactly what I was hoping you would say,' he answered. 'If your lordship would take command, I should let the men go with an easy conscience. I shall send Denton with you as your second. He is a steady, reliable officer, and I am quite sure will assist you to the very best of his ability.'

'He will prove of great assistance to me, I have no doubt,' I said; 'and now tell me at what hour we had better start, and how many men I am to take with me.'

'You will leave here not a minute later than seven o'clock, or, in other words, just as dusk is falling. I find I cannot spare you more than five hundred men, but under the circumstances, they should prove sufficient for the purpose.'

'Very good. You may rely upon our doing the best we can to give a good account of ourselves.'

When I returned to the palace I found that it was time for tiffin, and having prepared myself for it, I made my way to the anteroom where it was our custom to wait until the meal was announced. I found it empty, but I had not been there very many minutes before the Princess Natalie entered. I moved from where I was sitting by the window to offer her a seat, and my steps must have revealed my identity to her, for she said at once, with an air of entreaty that was inexpressibly touching:

'Lord Instow, I have been looking forward to this opportunity of seeing you alone, for I want you to tell me the real truth about my brother, without hiding anything from me. I have asked the doctor, but he only tells me that he is doing as well as can be hoped, and expects me to rest content with that. You will see that such an answer gives me no real idea as to what is the matter with him. And as you know, I love him so dearly, and I am so frightened about him.'

I took her hand, and led her to a seat near the window. Never had I seen her look more beautiful, and certainly never more sad. In the present crisis her infirmity seemed more than usually cruel. She was filled with such a desire to help, she possessed such a stock of tenderness and devotion, and yet by reason of her blindness she was debarred from doing anything.

'Natalie,' I said, 'I will tell you the truth. Marie is ill, very ill, there can be no doubt upon that point. But he is better to-day, and the doctor is, I fancy, a degree more hopeful. You are aware how delicate he has been these three years past. Well, the plain truth is he has overtaxed his powers lately, and this illness is the result. What a terrible time this is for you I know, but you must endeavour to cheer Olivia, and she must try to cheer you. You will be brave, will you not, for all our sakes?'

She tried instantly to look happier, and the effort almost brought the tears into my eyes, so brave and yet so ineffectual was it.

'They tell me you are working yourself nearly to death to save my brother's kingdom,' she said, after a moment's pause, laying her hand upon mine as it rested on the arm of her chair. 'What a good day it was for us when Marie first met you!'

The touch of her soft hand, and the music of her voice sent a thrill through me like quicksilver, and one that presently settled in my heart,

making me long, with a greater desire than I had ever yet felt, to tell this sweet girl, what I had known for upwards of a year in my own mind, yet had never before dared to put into words, and that was how fondly and how truly I loved her.

'I wonder if you will always think the same,' I said, more for the sake of gaining time for thought than for any other reason.

'Why should I not?' she asked, turning her face with its poor blind eyes up to mine. 'You are goodness and kindness itself, and I shall always honour you and be grateful to you. And so will poor Marie if he is spared to us. Oh, Lord Instow, think what his life means to me! Ask yourself if anything should befall him what my fate will be. I shall be left alone—quite alone in all the world.'

This was too much for me; so without any more hesitation I placed my arm round her, and drew her to me.

'Natalie, my love, my queen,' I cried, 'you must not say those cruel words. As long as I live you will never be alone in the world—for I love you, and have loved you ever since I first saw you, and I ask nothing better from the future than the right to protect and care for you. Natalie, say you love me in return and will be my wife.'

She nestled in my arms, her beautiful head lying upon my shoulder. I could feel that she was trembling violently. But she was strangely silent. This frightened me, and I bade her turn her face to me.

'You do not love me,' I cried. 'I was wrong to speak to you in that fashion.'

This brought her speech back to her as quickly as I could wish.

'You were not wrong,' she answered. 'I love you with my whole heart and soul. It seems to me I have loved you always.'

I kissed her upon her pure sweet lips, and called her by the sacred name of wife. Oh Heaven, what happiness was mine! I had nursed my passion so long in secret that it seemed to burst forth into greater flame by reason of such confinement. How the remaining interval passed before tiffin was announced I have only a confused recollection. I remember telling Natalie of the expedition I was to lead against the enemy that evening, and assuring her that she need have no fears for my safety. Then Olivia entered and was told the news; and the remembrance of the loving way in which she kissed us both and wished us every happiness, although her own heart was strained nearly to breaking pitch by her anxiety, even at this distance of time comes back to me like a touch of pain.

I am ashamed to say that in spite of the sorrow under which we were labouring on account of the king's health, in spite of the grave position of the kingdom, I spent the remainder of that afternoon in an earthly Paradise. It was Natalie who listened to my plans for bringing about the salvation of the Médangs; it was Natalie who gave me the locket she wore round her own soft neck, for a talisman that was to bring me back in safety to her. The sun, sinking below the hills, and the long shadows of night drawing across the plain, found us together on the battlements, and it was not until an hour before it was

time for us to start that I went to make my final arrangements with the Governor.

Almost punctually on the stroke of seven an officer entered the palace to inform me that the troops had fallen in. I accordingly bade my sweetheart and sister farewell, and with a curious mist before my eyes, and a feeling in my heart that had never been there before, took my place at the head of the force under my command.

'Good-bye, my lord,' said Prennan, shaking me warmly by the hand. 'The prisoner, who is to act as your guide, is handcuffed between two men as you see; nevertheless I should still advise you to keep your eye upon him. You have the pick of my garrison, and I wish you every possible success.'

I reciprocated his wish, and then, the gates having been opened, gave the word of command, and in the gathering gloom we marched out and down the hill.

Of the march that followed there is little to tell. On leaving the city our way lay through the jungle for the first ten miles by means of well-defined paths. Then the road became somewhat more intricate and finally it struck me as being a mere matter of guesswork on our guide's part. He, however, seemed quite confident, and as his life depended on the result, I was the more prepared to trust him.

It was a strange experience, and one not to be easily forgotten, that march through the jungle. After we had left the path proper it was in some cases as much as we could do to force a passage through the dense masses of creeper, the interlacing bamboos, and the thick grasses that barred our way. The sounds of the forest were also curious in the extreme. As we pressed forward it was to the chattering accompaniment of half-awakened monkeys; while with every stroke of the *parang*, startled birds flew from their shelter in the bushes, and went whirling into the darkness. Now and again a deer would spring up almost from under our feet, and be gone again before one had time to realise he was there, while more than once we heard a tiger making his peculiar cry at no great distance from the line of march.

When we had been pushing our way on for what seemed an eternity, I gave the command to halt, and with the assistance of a match examined my watch. It was exactly a quarter past ten; so thinking we should be somewhere near our destination, I called the guide up and interrogated him.

He replied to the effect that in less than a quarter of an hour he would bring us to the pass; and warning him again that his fate would be summary if he deceived me, I ordered the march to proceed.

His statement proved to be correct, for well within the time stated we found ourselves approaching a range of hills that towered up into the moonlit sky. The ground had been slowly ascending for some time prior to this, and there could be no doubt that we were now close to our destination. A few moments later we left the jungle, and, climbing a small stretch of open land, found ourselves at the entrance to a long pass, or as it might be more correctly termed, gully, in the hills. From the bottom, which was scarcely a hundred feet wide, the walls rose almost sheer

on one side to a height of perhaps two hundred feet, on the other to a height of fifty; in the latter case there was then a peculiar description of plateau from which the hill rose again, this time on a gentler slope, for another eighty or ninety feet.

Halting my men at the mouth, and taking Denton with me, I hastened along the pass, noting its peculiarities and adaptabilities for my purpose as I went. In something like twenty minutes I had reached the farther end, had learnt what I wanted to know, and was ready to turn back.

On rejoining my command, I divided it into three parts. One—the strongest, I placed under Denton at the head of the pass, in order that it might command the exit. The second, which I proposed to take charge of myself, I established on the plateau half-way through the gully. The third I stationed almost at the farther end, just where it would best be able to cut off the retreat.

As soon as they were in their several positions, and I had satisfied myself that they were not discernible from the bottom of the pass, I gave my final instructions to the officers in command of each party. These were to the effect that not a shot was to be fired until they saw the rocket—which I had brought with me for that express purpose—go up. After the discharge of a second rocket not another cartridge was to be expended. Then I placed the signal in position, and afterwards lay down, with the prisoner beside me, in charge of his keepers, to await the course of events. I had no intention that he should have an opportunity afforded him of giving his friends the alarm.

For nearly two hours we lay concealed, all the time awaiting the foe's appearance with an anxiety no one who has not taken part in such an affair could realise. The moon dropped lower upon the hill, the night wind sighed like a lost spirit among the rocks and long grass, a night bird hooted from a tree, and once or twice jackals cried to each other from across the pass. It was dreary work, rendered perhaps more so to my mind by the semi-tracherous nature of the business we had come to accomplish. Had it been possible, I would rather have given the foe battle in the open, man to man; but one moment's reflection showed me the madness of such a proceeding. On the other hand I remembered that the force in question was marching against us with a similar purpose in view, and when all was said and done we were only taking care of ourselves. At the best 'twas fine argument for both sides, and one had to take it at one's own valuation.

Almost as my repeater struck half-past eleven, an officer whom I had stationed at the end of the pass came to inform me that the enemy had entered it. Next moment there burst upon my ear the sound of voices, and with a suddenness that startled me the advance guard of the enemy appeared in sight. Scarcely more than fifty yards behind them came the main body, chatting and laughing without any thought of a surprise. I waited until they were exactly opposite me, and then, crouching behind a rock, in order that the tiny flame might give them no warning of our position, I lit a match and set fire to the rocket. With a long hiss and a trail

of sparks it rose into the air, and at the same instant two hundred and fifty rifles rang out, followed an instant later by a similar number.

Anything like the horror and confusion of the next few minutes no man could possibly imagine. The terrified troops in the gully below knew neither what to do nor which way to turn. Their ranks were completely disorganised, while volley after volley was being poured into them from the hillside above. They tried to advance, but were met by Denton's fire; they tried to retreat, only to find themselves assailed by the third party; and all the time my detachment was raking them from mid-between. The air was filled with cries and curses, the rattle of rifles, and the shouting of orders. Dante's *Inferno* would not have compared with it. When I imagined the time had come, I discharged the second rocket and the firing instantly ceased.

As soon as I thought I could make myself heard, I shouted in a loud voice, in French:

'Lay down your arms, and your lives will be spared. Fail to do so, and I open fire once more.'

When sufficient time had been given for this command to be executed, I ordered what remained of the force to march down the valley in the direction they had come. This was done by all able to move, and so nicely had our arrangements fitted in, that almost at the moment they reached the mouth of the defile Du Berg's force entered the plain on the other side.

Half an hour later we were shaking hands upon our success. With the loss of but three men killed and five wounded we had cut up a force of nearly a thousand, killing two hundred, wounding upwards of three hundred more, and capturing the balance with all their arms and ammunition.

It was then arranged that I should take charge of the prisoners and wounded and convey them back to the capital; so when my force had rested, I set off on my return journey. It proved a harder task than it had been going, but I was so elated by my success that I would have undertaken it had it been twice as difficult.

It was well on towards evening when we reached the capital. The news had preceded us, and enthusiastic to the last degree was the welcome we received. Crowds lined the streets through which we passed, and when we entered the citadel itself the climax was reached. Prentiss received me in the courtyard with the garrison under arms, and as soon as I had seen my convoy safely inside the gates, I greeted him. I could feel the grip he gave my hand for hours after. But there was another welcome I was waiting for, and when I entered the palace that welcome I received. Frightened, however, by what Natalie told me of the king's condition, I left her and went in search of the doctor. I found him awaiting me in my own sitting-room.

'What news have you to tell me?' I asked as I shook him by the hand. 'How is the king?'

'Worse,' he answered sadly. 'Much worse. He has been almost continually delirious since you left, and now shivering fits, or rigors as we call them, have set in. Knowing his constitution so well, I cannot understand what they mean.'

I groaned aloud.

'Tell me candidly your opinion,' I said, resolved

to come at his meaning. 'Do you anticipate the worst?'

The young doctor nearly broke down as he answered:

'God help us! I fear I do.'

SOME REALISTIC STAGE-EFFECTS.

THE sphere of the stage-manager has widened since the days when Mr Vincent Crummies considered the introduction of a pump and two tubs on the stage a notable achievement in realism. A drawing-room scene is now furnished with almost as much care and expense as if it were actually an apartment in the West End, while the inevitable attack in a modern military drama is incomplete without the aid of a complement of Maxim guns.

Where there is such close adherence to reality, part of the credit is due to the upholsterer and the ordnance manufacturer. It is in the invention of subtle devices by which the spectator is completely illusioned, frequently by means which he would hardly suspect, that stage-craft is raised almost to the level of an art.

Spectacle and drama naturally afford the widest scope for realistic effects. In T. W. Robertson's military comedy, *Questa*, however, there are certain 'effects' introduced which for forcibly conveying the desired impression by thoroughly legitimate means have never been surpassed. The artistic way that the climax is worked up at the end of the second act—the departure of the troops for the Crimea—is enough to stir the patriotism of the most phlegmatic Briton.

We see only a London drawing-room, with four or five of the *dramatis persone* looking from a balcony window at the various regiments which are supposed to be passing in the street below. But we hear the brass and fife bands playing the farewell marches, the sharp peremptory commands of the officers, the continuous tramp of the men as they file steadily past. Little wonder the scene affected even the indolent Hugh Chalcot, and made him suddenly resolve to join his friends in seeking the fortune of war. Yet that impressive tramp, tramp, of marching soldiery is simply produced by a couple of assistants behind the scenes, who 'mark time' on the boards, and another couple who do the same in a shallow box containing cinders.

In the next act are introduced some telling 'winter effects.' Here we have the interior of a rudely constructed hut, occupied by the English officers at the seat of war in the Crimea; this is a built-in scene with a 'practicable' door, the only entrance to the hut, on the right hand side of the stage. At the beginning of the act the wind is heard shrieking and moaning outside, and when any one enters or leaves the hut he opens the door just sufficient to let him pass through, then quickly closes it to prevent it being blown inward. In the momentary opening of the door we hear the wind shriek louder, and catch a glimpse of the white waste outside, with the snow driving in clouds against the door.

Rather elaborate preparations are necessary to faithfully reproduce this effect. The outside of the hut door is first profusely covered with pads of cotton-wool. Then there is placed opposite to

it, in the side-wings, one of the large riddles used by builders' men to sift sand and lime, and which resembles the frame of an ordinary door strung with wires. Two men stand behind the riddle with a plentiful supply of bran and salt mixed, which, every time the door is opened during the progress of the storm, they toss rapidly through the wires, aiming always at the door. The wires cut through the bran and salt, and give the compound the flakey appearance of drifting snow, the bran being used to soften the heavy swishing sound of the salt.

To further emphasise the severity of the Crimean winter, when Hugh Chalcot, late the lounge about town, rises yawning from his couch and prepares for his morning toilet, he finds that the water in the bucket has frozen over-night. Now, no stage-manager would for a moment think of putting real ice in that bucket; he has choice of two simple and inexpensive expedients by which he can produce the desired effect even in the dogdays. He may cover the bottom of the bucket with a layer of sand, place a common dinner-plate on the top of the sand, then fill the bucket three parts full of water. Or, instead of the sand and plate, he can fix two cross-bars of thin wood between the sides of the bucket, above the surface of the water. 'Ice, as usual!' remarks Chalcot, as he taps the plate—or the laths—with a crowbar, to convey the idea that the substance is ice. When a more vigorous blow breaks the obstruction, and the water splashes over the sides of the bucket, the illusion is complete.

Shipwrecks on the stage are invariably depicted as occurring at night, or in the obscurity accompanying a thunderstorm; doubtless with the twofold object of heightening the impression and concealing the means by which it is attained. A thrilling incident in a certain sensational American drama is the passage through a stormy sea of a small boat, containing three of the characters, who are making their way to the lighthouse. To the spectators in front the slow and perilous progress of the tiny craft looks wonderfully realistic, but when seen from behind it has rather a funny aspect. The 'raging billows' are agitated by scene-shifters stationed at the wings, in the manner usually employed in shaking carpets. The 'property' boat is a mere profile—the model of one side of a boat—which the actors behind it grasp by the gunwale, and sway vigorously up and down, while they walk leisurely across the stage, their feet hidden by the raging billows aforesaid.

Playgoers who witnessed the early artistic productions of *Les Cloches de Corneville* may remember that, in the scene representing the 'Crusaders' Hall' in the haunted chateau, the variegated colours of the stained-glass window were reflected on the floor, apparently cast by the light of the moon shining through the window. But on the stage the poetic effects of nature are not always reproduced by the agency that would most readily suggest itself to the uninitiated. Although the window was a painted transparency, lit from behind by limelight, to convey the impression of clear moonlight outside, this illuminating medium did not supply the cast shadow; limelight, so employed, would have been too powerful for the purpose. There was therefore set in the side-wings a magic lantern, containing

a slide painted in exact imitation of the stained-glass window, and so focussed that the picture was reflected on the floor just where the coloured shadow of the window would naturally fall.

An instance of the care bestowed by Sir Henry Irving in perfecting even a minor illusion is shown in his dressing of the part of Mathias in *The Bells*. The first scene represents the interior of the burgomaster's house; the time is winter, and through the latticed window the snow is seen falling thick outside. The privileged visitor behind the scenes on a night when *The Bells* is produced will see, placed near the side-wings, a tub containing soap and water, which a boy keeps stirring into a fine creamy lather. Before Mathias appears on the stage, all cloaked and booted, he steps into the tub, and the boy splashes the soapy lather over his person. The next minute the burgomaster enters his house, and, having presumably come through the snow-storm, he is covered with the white flakes, which gradually melt and disappear in sight of the audience in a way that natural snow could hardly hope to excel.

Even at the beginning of his career the eminent Lyceum manager displayed his genius for inventing original effects. While the youthful member of a provincial stock company, he was on one occasion cast for a mock supernatural character in burlesque. With the object of making the character appear to have long claw-like fingers, he painted the back of his hands with dark streaks, that ran upward from the space between each finger. To render the illusion more consistent, his fingers were never closed while he was on the stage, but always spread out against his dark-coloured costume. Old playgoers who saw the actor in this part describe the effect as singularly weird and sinister.

Water can be imitated on the stage in a variety of ways. In one of the set scenes in Mr G. R. Sims' play, *The Lights of London*, showing the Regent's Canal by night, the villain throws his accomplice into the water, and, immediately after, the hero leaps in to rescue him. Each time the body disappears in the 'turgid stream'—represented, of course, by an open trap, with a soft mattress conveniently placed in the cellar below—a handful of salt is tossed up through the open trap, to imitate spray splashing off the surface of the water.

An ingenious contrivance has been used on the continent to simulate a stream of water trickling from a fountain. A transparent glass tube, spiral or corkscrew shaped, and gradually thickening towards its base, is fixed between the mouth of the ornamental dolphin above and the bottom of the basin, which is covered with a sheet of glass. Concealed in the framework of the fountain is an automatic appliance by which the glass tube is set revolving, giving it all the appearance, even at a short distance, of a jet of running water.

To exhibit a life-like and apparently well-fed dragon, measuring some twenty feet from his crested head to his flapping tail; to induce him to roll his fiery red eyes in their sockets, and snap his huge jaws regularly every two minutes, while he drags his body tortuously along the stage, may seem an incredible, not to say dangerous, experiment. Yet the dragon we saw at a London theatre a few years ago might have been safely

introduced as a domestic pet into any household. Terrific as he looked, his body was only the wrapper that enclosed a number of cleverly drilled little boys, who, closely following one another in a crouching posture, directed the movements of the monster.

But when they stage Wagner's operas in first-class style, they give us a dragon that 'goes one better,' for he actually belches smoke. *Mephistopheles* has been known to make his first appearance before old *Faust* in a cloud of vapour, tinted a weird green by the skilful manipulation of the lime-light. A real steam-launch puffing real smoke from a real funnel, and darting hither and thither in a tank of real water, was some time ago a feature in an up-to-date play of society life. Then, in a set-scene with a built-up cottage, a picturesque effect is sometimes obtained by showing a wreath of smoke issuing from the chimney. The method by which this effect is produced contradicts the proverb, 'Where there is smoke there is fire,' for a quantity of hot water poured upon a shovelful of quicklime will create smoke enough to simulate the smokiest of chimneys. The possibilities of smoke or steam as an aid to illusive effect have not yet however been exhausted. Probably the day is not far distant when some enterprising manager will introduce behind the footlights—but, we hope, no farther—a realistic imitation of a London fog.

THE PLAZA OF SANTA MARTA.

A STORY OF THE CUBAN INSURRECTION.

By H. BINDLOSS, Author of *Rising of the Brass Men*, &c.

Two men, ragged and travel-stained, lay sleeping the deep sleep of utter weariness on the bare floor of an old Spanish tower in the island of Cuba.

The one with his head resting in the angle of the wall and a newly healed scar showing white upon his sunburnt forehead, was Charles P. Marshall, an American journalist on the staff of a paper which supported the cause of the Cuban Insurgents, and indeed of revolutionaries all the world over, with the usual vigour of a transatlantic journal. He had made part of a campaign with the Insurgents, in search of accurate details, which he had got, more in fact than he cared about; and eventually, together with his companion, Don Jaime de La Costa, a leading revolutionary, fell into the hands of the Spanish authorities when the troops stormed Lagunitas entrenchments.

'Ola compañero, wake up—it is already dawn.' With these words ringing in his ears, the American raised himself stiffly on one elbow and gazed sleepily about him. Then memory came back with a pang, and as his eyes fell upon the set face of La Costa he realised that this was the last time either would wake from sleep, for both lay under the sentence of death.

By degrees the gray light grew clearer, until at length a single golden beam streaming through the narrow window quivered upon the rough masonry; and dragging himself towards the barred opening, for he was aching in every limb, Marshall

looked out upon the sunrise—the last sunrise he would ever see.

Beneath him lay broad fields of sugar-cane, rolling away in lush green waves before the morning breeze towards a wall of misty mountains which rose against the eastern sky. Here and there flat-topped, white-walled quintas nestled among groves of orange and nispero trees and broad-leaved bananas; while the faint air that entered the cell seemed cooled with dew and heavy with the fragrance of flowers. Under the feathery palms which fringed the broad high-road, the white dust lay moist and still, and out of their blue-green shadow came the tinkling of mule bells and a clear voice chanting the chorus of a vintage song; while the merry laughter of children echoed across the wet sword-blades of the sugar-cane.

The American ground his heels into the boards. The world seemed very good that morning—a place of light and sunshine; and yet before the rising sun had crossed the meridian, he, now so full of life, would be flung like a dog into a shallow trench, amid bubbling quicklime—and he shuddered at the thought.

'This is what you get for interfering in other people's troubles—yellow fever, risk of drowning, a wound when the troops stormed the trenches, and now—ugh—a white wall and a firing party,' he muttered half aloud; and La Costa, who was proud of his knowledge of English—or rather American—answered:

'Ah my fren, it is the fortune of war—all the same in fifty year—and we die in a good cause.'

Even then Marshall could not but admire the soldierly grace of his companion, as the latter flung his arms above his head, showing his broad chest and long straight limbs—a fine type of the old Spanish blood, the American thought; and he tried to smile in reply.

But it was an unsatisfactory ghost of a smile, for the journalist had no desire to die just then—in a good cause, or otherwise. Besides, having seen the Spanish troops, mostly poor hill peasants, torn from their homes by a ruthless conscription, dying like flies in pestilential swamps, and dropping out of the ranks in scores on every scorching march to die by the wayside, yet bearing starvation and sickness with heroic fortitude; he was by no means so sure as he was in the beginning that the revolutionary party monopolised the virtues of courage and endurance. Neither was he so absolutely convinced of the goodness of the cause. After all, he thought, La Costa was right; it would be all the same in fifty years, 'ready, present, fire,' a well-directed volley, the sting of a bullet—and afterwards darkness and oblivion. Then the fear came that it might not be a well-directed volley; for he had seen some ghastly sights that campaign; men, half slain by the bungling aim of recruit battalions, done to death by rifle butt or bayonet thrust. Anyway, there was no escape now; he must make

the best of it, and if the insurgent could take things philosophically, he would too. Presently the Cuban also approached the window, and pointing to a distant hillside where tall palms rose clearly against the morning blue, observed :

'There are our friends, the Martínez column. It is not far, and yet they do not know—and to-day we die. *Ay de mí!*'

After this came silence, and, for what seemed hours and hours, the American sat with his head in his hands, until there was a hammering at the door, and a Spanish soldier stood on the threshold, beckoning with his finger. Their time had come; and pulling himself together, Marshall stepped out into the glare of tropic sunlight.

Half a company of Cazadores Canarios, conscripts from the volcanic rocks of Tenerife and Grand Canary, marched in front with fixed bayonets, and half a company followed behind; the nickel buttons of their dull green uniforms and the brass medallions on their clumsy kepis glinting in the sun.

When they reached the little town, the narrow streets lay baking in fervent heat. A cloud of hot dust, stirred up by the tread of marching feet, powdered the Cazadores, turning their green to gray; and every flat azotea roof and narrow side-walk was crowded with white-clad citizens, all revolutionaries at heart, who scowled at the Spanish troops from beneath their broad-brimmed hats.

The sunlight flashed back from slippery stones and white walls, and Marshall pushed his battered straw hat down on his forehead to shut out the dazzling brightness and the eager gaze of the crowd; but La Costa drew his crimson sash tighter round his ragged garments, and swung his costly Panama to the ground, as a low murmur of sympathy and pity rose from the spectators, while the eyes of the women grew dim, and many a swarthy Cuban felt a choking in his throat.

Then the murmur changed into a fierce growl of hate and defiance, and the crowd pressed forward, their hands upon the hafts of their long knives.

A hoarse voice raised the cry 'Viva la Cuba! Viva La Costa! Viva los Americanos!' and it echoed from man to man down all the winding street, until the listless air seemed full of the sound; but the front rank of the Cazadores swung their bayonets to the charge, and the march went on.

Steadily the line of bright bayonets and dull green uniforms pressed on between rows of stern faces and pitying eyes, past gardens filled with fragrant flowers, and booths piled high with luscious fruit. At last in front of the Alcalde's house, where the Spanish flag hung in drooping folds of blood and gold, a creaking mule-cart lumbered across the way, and the perspiring troops halted to let it pass.

Then, with Spanish courtesy, the crowd opened up, and a woman came forward, followed by a dark-haired little girl, carrying a heavy vase of wine and a bouquet of heliotrope. As the child passed between the soldiers, a sergeant thrust his rifle barrel in her way, but a young lieutenant put it aside with his sword, and smiled down upon her as she went fearlessly forward, and, lift-

ing her olive-tinted face, handed La Costa the wine.

The Cuban took it from her and stood bare-headed in the fierce sunlight, a picturesque scarecrow of a man, unkempt and ragged, but with the grace of Old Castile showing in every movement. Then, after touching the vase with his lips, he passed it to Marshall, and picking the child up, kissed her on either cheek as he took the flowers from the little brown hand.

'Pobre La Costa, pobre Americano, dele uno tambien (give him one too),' she said; and placing her gently on the ground again, with a 'Gracias, niña mia,' he smiled as he handed the American a spray of the scented blossom.

Marshall felt his eyelids quiver, and a kind of gasping sob rose from the crowd; but at a sharp word of command the dusty troops moved forward down the winding street. A cracked bell began to toll, and as its harsh vibrations rose on the heated air, a deep silence fell on the spectators, the jingle of arms and tramp of heavily shod feet sounding hollow and strange.

'It is the good priests of Santa Marta; they say the mass for our rest,' said La Costa quietly to his companion, crossing himself as he spoke.

By-and-by the troops swung out into the wide sunlit Plaza, where, at the head of a scanty battalion of Cazadores, a little stout colonel of infantry waited their coming. 'Stand the dogs there.—You have ten minutes to make ready, and then you die. First you shall see where you lead your followers,' was all he said in answer to Marshall's protests that he was an American citizen, and the two were rudely thrust back.

The scene was a striking one. Three double lines of Cazadores formed the sides of a hollow square, the front rank facing outwards towards the restless crowd, the rear turning inwards with rifles at the shoulder. A seething mob surged to and fro beyond. Every flat housetop swarmed with spectators, while against the white wall of the church of Santa Marta, which formed the fourth side of the square, stood four ragged peasants with handkerchiefs bound round their eyes, whose crime might have been the destroying of bridges or possibly the supplying of starving fugitives with food and shelter. Every weathered tile, and the gray house-leeks along the red roof, stood out with sharpness against the azure. The intense sunlight lit up every detail of the stained white clothing of the trembling wretches who waited their end, the lofty cross over the gable of the church throwing a black shadow upon the hot flags at their feet.

'Curse that bell—will it never cease?' said the officer as the monotonous jarring note filled the Plaza with its vibrations. Then La Costa turned towards the crowd, but before he could speak, a sergeant smote him in the face with the hilt of his sword-bayonet and the blood flowed from his mouth.

An angry cry and a hiss broke from the mob, and they surged wildly forward, snatching out their knives, only to recoil again before the flashing line of steel as the Cazadores bayonets came down at the charge to the level of their breasts.

Now the time had come, and there was no possible escape, the American felt all hesitation drop from him, and, like one in a dream, watched

the troops who formed the third side of the square unfixing bayonets and bringing their rifles to the hip. Presently a low arched door opened in the wall of the church, and as the odour of incense drifted out, mingled with the sound of the organ, a priest in his vestments stepped forth from the shadowy interior and strode towards the colonel.

'Stop—in the name of the church—it is sacrilege—and thou shalt do no murder,' he said fearlessly; but the plump colonel only laughed, cruelly answering:

'I do justice and not murder,' then turning aside disdainfully gave the order: 'Take that man away.'

Two Cazadores forced the indignant padre back, and a great hush fell on the crowd. Breathing hard, Marshall listened to the sound of the chanting and the drone of the organ, while the harsh tones of the bell grated on his quivering nerves. Then the rifle barrels flashed in the sunlight and came home to the shoulder with a rattle—the colonel dropped his sword point, and a voice called 'Tira!'

A crackle of red flame blazed out, followed by the crash of a volley as the rifle muzzles jerked upwards, and a heavy wreath of blue smoke rolled across the faces of the crowd. Marshall felt the blood stand still in his veins, and for a moment dared not turn his head. When he did so, he saw one of the peasants fallen on his knees tearing with both hands at his side. Two of his comrades lay face downwards on the hot flags, motionless heaps of tattered clothing; and a fourth, with the blood trickling from him, and his face gray like ashes, leaned back against the wall, his head slowly drooping forward, and his limbs quivering beneath him.

A howl of rage like the snarling of a pack of wolves, a cry of deadly hate that boded little good to the oppressors when their turn came, rose from the mob, and Marshall saw the stout colonel shudder as he listened; but the glittering wall of steel met them, turn which way they would, and they stamped and fumed in impotent fury.

The American lost his head with horror and indignation, and in the most powerful Spanish he could muster cursed the colonel before all his men, concluding: 'Brutes—cold-blooded murderers of unarmed men! A civilised nation cannot look on and see helpless peasants propped against walls and shot like wild beasts. Wait a little, and you will hear the roar of American guns, and see the Stars and Stripes over Havana and Matanzas!'

A yell of 'Bravo Americano!' rose from the frantic mob; but the colonel looked on unmoved. 'What does he say?' he asked a lieutenant. 'Ah, it is so. All the English are mad, and most of the Americans too.'

Biting his lips, the journalist lapsed into silence, feeling that at last he could understand desperate men using dynamite with awful effect on crowded troop trains, and when a sergeant of Cazadores gripped his shoulder, he turned upon the man so fiercely that, unarmed as he was, the soldier dropped his hand.

Then the colonel pointed with his sword, and Marshall closed his eyes when he heard a hoarse voice say: 'Two files forward and finish the dogs,' and in spite of his own peril he turned sick and

faint as he heard a long-drawn 'Ah!' rise from the crowd, and the sharp clash of bayonets against the stones—he knew what it meant, for he had seen such things before.

Side by side the two men walked forward at a signal from an officer, and when they turned in front of the church, a sergeant came forward with cloths in his hand, but the Cuban waved him back.

'Good-bye, my friend. We have fought a good fight together—and to-day we rest side by side—it is well,' said La Costa, as after the manner of the Spaniards he threw his arm round the American's shoulder, then took the place pointed out.

With dry lips and parched throat, Marshall drew himself up and glanced at the Insurgent who stood bareheaded in the sunlight, erect and proud, holding the flowers lightly in his hand, and his eyes filled as La Costa caught his look and smiled. Then, with defiance in his gaze, he turned and faced the rifles. There was a clinking of levers, and the empty shells rattled out upon the stones—the breach blocks closed with a clatter, and for a few moments there was a harrowing pause, while the troops waited the word to fire.

Suddenly Marshall felt the blood stir madly in every pulsing artery, for above the continuous drone of the organ a rattle of rifery rang out, somewhere behind the town, followed by a sound he knew so well, the continual 'rip-rap, rip-rap,' of repeaters.

'Winchester rifles, thank Heaven!' he shouted aloud. 'Must be the Martinez column,' then his voice broke off suddenly, for he remembered that in a few minutes more it would matter little to him whether the Insurgent forces arrived or not.

A confused murmur rose from the crowd, which swayed to and fro like the waves of a sea; then there was a great clattering of hoofs down the stony street, and presently two mounted officers broke through the mob, striking right and left with the flat of their swords to clear a passage, and reined in their lathering horses by the colonel's side.

A bugle-call echoed through the Plaza; the square of green uniforms broke up and swung round, changing into a long line of fours; and while the astonished prisoners tried to collect their scattered senses, the last files of the Cazadores swung out of the Plaza at the double, and, their footfalls growing fainter and fainter, disappeared down a narrow street.

Marshall rubbed his eyes to see if he were asleep, but there was no mistaking the ceaseless rattle of the Winchester repeaters, smuggled over from the United States for the use of the rebels, or the feeble return fire in the deeper report of the Spanish rifles. Then a great shout rose from the crowd: '*Viva la Cuba!—Viva la revolucion!*'

It was all so strange and sudden, that now the peril was past, the American felt as weak as a child, and dropped limply against the wall, hardly daring to believe his ears, and looking about with vacant eyes.

A scantily-clad, sun-browned peasant woman crept softly forward, and throwing herself down on the scorching stones, rocked to and fro over

a crimson-stained face which lay still and white upon her lap, and answered neither word nor sign to her despairing cries and bitter tears.

A priest came out of the shadowy doorway, and touching her shoulder, lifted the woman gently to her feet, while a procession of dark-robed clerics carried their silent burdens away, the crowd opening up and standing bareheaded as they passed, and Marshall shivered as a woman's piercing shrieks rang in his ears.

Presently the distant sound of marching feet rose from the streets beyond, drawing steadily nearer and nearer, to a running accompaniment of *Vivas*! and shouts of delight, until it swelled into the measured 'tramp, tramp' of a large battalion, mingled with the clash of steel sheaths and the jingle of arms.

At last the enthusiastic mob split up, and amid bursts of cheering, the head of the insurgent column swung into the Plaza through a rolling cloud of dust. On they came, four by four, and company by company, swarthy, sun-scorched men, ragged and tattered, powdered with dust and grimed with smoke; line after line of broad-brimmed Panama hats and red sashes defiling out of the narrow streets; and as the ragged companies wheeled into line across the broad Plaza the American could hardly repress a smile at the curious collection of arms. Some carried Winchester repeaters, some Spanish military rifles, others breach-loading shot-guns, or single barrel muzzle-loaders; while a few had nothing but a big cavalry sabre belted round their waist. The journalist knew however that, although appearances were by no means in their favour, this same battalion had beaten the best of the Spanish troops in the open field.

Meantime there was a pandemonium of laughing, shouting, and cheering, for, with true Spanish versatility, the feelings of the citizens had changed from horror and hatred to the wildest merriment and enthusiasm. An eager crowd drove forward along the face of the line, thrusting bunches of luscious fruit and vases of wine before them, as they struggled to be first with their gifts; and poor peon labourers gaily invested their last centimo in *copitas de caña*, and only laughed when the swaying of the mob spilled the liquor from the quaint cylindrical glasses before they could reach the side of the thirsty soldiers.

At last the leader, with his toes sticking through the end of his worn-out shoes, strode forward, pushing aside the enthusiastic group who forced their gifts and attentions on La Costa and the American, grasped their hands, saying: 'Comrades, I salute you,' and caught the insurgent in his arms. Afterwards the journalist was heartily glad to withdraw with him for rest and shade into the cool patio of the Alcalde's house, that worthy having been ejected with scant ceremony.

That night a banquet was spread beneath the broad leaves of the bananas in the wide patio, and though there was not much to eat—there never is in the track of marching troops—there was abundance of wine, the splash of fountains, and the scent of jasmine and heliotrope. La Costa and the American occupied the place of honour, but amid all the wild merriment, the shrieks of the poor peasant woman, as she saw her murdered husband carried away, rang in

Marshall's ears; and he shuddered at the ruddy wine, for his nerves were shaken, and the ghastly scene in the Plaza rose up before him in all its grim details. It does so yet at times, in the silent watches of the night.

TORPEDOES IN ACTION.

THERE are probably many persons who remember the scare created in the fleet which sailed under Sir Charles Napier to the Baltic in 1854, by the 'infernal machines,' which the Russians were said to have strewn thickly along the approaches to Cronstadt. The British sailor was ready enough to fight against weapons with which he was familiar, but these treacherous submarine 'devils' frightened him; and the consequence was that 'gallant Charley' and his ships gave Cronstadt a wide berth. We remember inspecting one of these 'infernal machines' which had been dredged up in the Baltic. It was a cone of galvanised iron, sixteen inches in diameter and twenty inches in length, containing a charge of ten pounds of gunpowder, with an apparatus for firing by sulphuric acid. The machine was the invention of Moritz Hermann Jacobi, an eminent Prussian physicist, better known to fame as the inventor of electrotyping. But this was not the first torpedo. As far back as 1777, during the American War of Independence, David Bushnell the American father of the once well-known 'Independent theologian,' invented an explosive machine which was to send the whole British fleet to the bottom. He tried his invention, under favourable circumstances, against the British frigate *Cerberus*, but the attempt to blow her up was an utter failure, and no more was heard of David Bushnell and his terrible torpedo.

Twenty years later another American, Robert Fulton, the remarkable genius to whom we practically owe the steamboat, invented a submarine explosive machine with which he experimented successfully on the Seine and the Thames, but both the French and English governments declined to adopt his patent.

From that time till the Crimean War the torpedo remained in abeyance, and so trifling was the damage done by the Russian 'infernal machines' that naval experts dismissed them from their calculations as practically useless.

But in the American Civil War the torpedo came once more to the front, and this time it came to stay. It is to the ingenuity and enterprise of the naval officers of the Confederacy that torpedo warfare owes its remarkable development. The want of material and appliances for shipbuilding in the Southern States drove the Confederates to have recourse to the torpedo as the only means of coping with the Northern Monitors, and it was a despised and derided invention of Robert Fulton's which they first

adopted to render the torpedo effective. Fulton had designed a submarine boat, the object of which was to glide unseen beneath the keels of hostile ships, whence, without attracting attention, holes could be bored in their bottoms. The strange craft was rejected by both the British and French governments, to whom it was offered. But the United States, during the war with Great Britain in 1812, gave him an opportunity of showing what his submarine boat could do. Fulton's boat was despatched against the *Ramillies* three-decker, as she lay off New London. The submerged craft was run successfully under the *Ramillies*, and her crew commenced boring a hole in the bottom of the big ship, but want of air compelled them to come to the surface before their task was completed. The alarm was given, and the chance was lost. No other opportunity of assailing a British man-of-war presented itself, and the submarine boat was relegated to the limbo of failures.

But the idea was not lost or forgotten. In 1863 Theodore Stoney of Charleston built a submarine boat, cigar-shaped, fifty-four feet in length and six feet in diameter, propelled by a screw worked by steam, and fitted with a spar torpedo. When she was submerged only her funnel and steering tower were visible. She made a night attack on the Federal war-ship *Iron-sides*, but, though she crept up unobserved and fired her torpedo, she failed to sink the *Iron-sides*, which, beyond receiving a violent shock, sustained no serious injury. The concussion of the discharge almost sent the submarine boat to the bottom, but she just managed to keep afloat, and was taken back to Charleston.

The next attempt made by a submarine boat of similar design was one of the most heroic incidents of the war. So faulty was the construction of this boat that on every one of her five trials she went to the bottom, carrying her crew with her. Yet, though certain death apparently awaited all who ventured in her, there were found men gallant enough to volunteer to take her against the Federal war-ships lying in Charleston harbour. On the night of 17th February 1864 the ill-fated craft, manned by two officers, Captain Carlson and Lieutenant Dixon, and five men, set out on her desperate venture. Every man on board of her must have known that the odds were a hundred to one against his escaping alive, but they went gallily out on their errand of death. Success crowned their daring effort: they fired their torpedo under the keel of the Federal Monitor *Housatonic* and sent her to the bottom. But their success was purchased at the cost of their lives. The submarine boat sank, and carried her little band of heroes with her. Two years later, when divers were sent down, they found the ill-starred vessel with her dead crew in her, every man at his post, lying close to the hull of the enemy she had destroyed.

There are still enthusiasts who believe in the submarine boat, despite the disastrous experience of the American Civil War. The latest design, launched a few months ago, seems in theory to have surmounted many of the diffi-

culties with regard to steering under water, and ascertaining from below the surface the whereabouts of an enemy, which have hitherto, in the opinion of naval experts, rendered such craft useless in actual warfare. But whether this new design will fulfil in practice all that is claimed for it in theory is extremely doubtful. The French navy has four of these submarine boats, two of which are said to be capable of doing six or eight knots at a depth of from forty to sixty feet, and launching torpedoes with precision. But our own Admiralty has no faith whatever in these craft.

The Confederates succeeded in destroying, by means of torpedoes, thirty-two Federal war-ships, of which four were ironclads; but in the majority of cases these results were obtained by stationary or floating torpedoes, and not by boat attacks.

Mr H. W. Wilson, in his admirable and fascinating book, *Ironclads in Action*, tells us that 'the Confederates employed a particularly deadly engine, which was called a 'coal torpedo.' It looked like a lump of coal, but was really a block of cast-iron, containing ten pounds of powder, and would, when placed in the fires of a boiler, at once explode, bursting the boiler. Such a torpedo might be planted with effect in stores of coal at a coaling station, in case it was certain that they would fall into the enemy's hands.' Clock-work torpedoes were also employed, and one of them was used at City Point, James River, on 9th August 1864. It was placed on board a barge, which was loading with ordnance stores for the Federal army, by two Confederates disguised as workmen, with the remark that the captain had ordered it to be put there. It exploded, and destroyed a large number of barges and vessels.

Even more dastardly and treacherous was the trick played by the Peruvians in the war against Chili in 1880. On two occasions they sent adrift boats, apparently laden with fruit and vegetables, but beneath this innocent cargo were two or three hundred pounds of dynamite with clock-work exploding apparatus. On the first occasion the captain of the Chilean war-ship *Loa* seized the boat as a welcome prize, and towed her alongside his ship, with the result that a terrific explosion occurred, sending the *Loa* with half her crew to the bottom. On the second occasion the cruiser *Coradonya* met with a similar fate. But surely there should be a protest, a stern and unanimous protest, from all civilised nations against such diabolical modes of warfare. There must be limits placed to the old principle that 'everything is fair in war'; and those limits should be definitely settled in the interests of humanity.

The experience of the American Civil War gave great encouragement to torpedoists, and when, in 1868, the Whitehead torpedo was produced, its enthusiastic admirers were confident that a new era in naval warfare had commenced. For here was a torpedo which no longer required to be towed alongside the ship it was intended to destroy, but was itself, in fact, a small ship, propelled by its own engines, driven by compressed air, capable of being sent direct to its mark from a distance of many

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hundred yards, at a speed of twenty and even thirty knots, and charged with an explosive that would sink the largest ironclad afloat. Improvement followed upon improvement, until it was thought perfection had been reached in the latest development of the Whitehead, with a theoretical range of eight hundred yards, a speed of thirty knots, and an explosive charge of two hundred pounds of gun-cotton. Torpedoists declared that the Whitehead had revolutionised naval warfare, and that the day of big battleships was over; for what was the use of building monster ironclads which could be sent to the bottom in an instant by a single torpedo fired from a boat not a hundredth part their size? It was seriously stated in 1886 that the *Nile* and the *Trafalgar*, the two great armoured battleships then on the stocks, would be the last of their class, because the torpedo had rendered such ships useless.

And what has the torpedo done in action to justify such extravagant expectations? Considered as a weapon of offence to be included in the armament of a fighting ship, and designed for use against ships in motion, it has so far proved an absolute failure. There are twenty-seven recorded instances of the use of the torpedo against ships in motion and in *not one* of these was a hit made. In every case has the torpedo missed the object at which it was aimed, and it has sometimes been a source of more danger to the ship firing it than to the enemy against whom it was fired. In one instance, that of the *Huascar*, in the war between Chili and Peru, a Lay torpedo turned and came straight back to the ship which discharged it, and she would probably have been 'hoist with her own petard' had not one of her officers leapt into the water and, at the risk of his life, diverted the course of the machine. At the battle of Yalu, in the recent war between China and Japan, the Chinese battleships were only too glad to get rid of their torpedoes anyhow, for the presence of these loaded weapons on a ship, with shells bursting about her decks, constituted an unexpected and appalling source of danger. The Chinese ironclad *Chih-Yuen* is believed to have been sunk by the explosion of one of her own torpedoes, fired by a Japanese shell. And the Japanese battleship *Matsushima* narrowly escaped a similar fate. Moreover, the Chinese torpedo-boats, which, in theory, were to have dashed in among the enemy under cover of the smoke and confusion and work fearful havoc, did absolutely nothing—did not score a single hit even at close quarters. No doubt they were not as smartly handled as they might have been or as they would have been by highly-trained European sailors. But then they had such a chance as torpedo boats will probably never have again in a naval battle. For gunpowder, with its accompanying smoke, may be considered a thing of the past, and, with a smokeless explosive in universal use, what becomes of the chance of the torpedo-boat? It could be seen approaching, and could not live to discharge its weapon under the awful hail of projectiles which the quick-firing guns would pour upon it. Smokeless powder and the quick-firing gun

have sounded the knell of the torpedo-boat as an agent of attack in battle on the open sea. So far the torpedo has done nothing in action against moving ships to justify the extraordinary claims made for it, and we are of opinion that the gun will still, as heretofore, be the dominant factor in deciding naval engagements.

But it does not therefore follow that the torpedo is a negligible quantity in future naval warfare. For, though unsuccessful against ships in motion, it has scored some remarkable successes against ships at anchor. In the last war between Russia and Turkey the Russians made considerable use of the torpedo for night attacks upon the Turkish ships, and one or two of their naval officers showed great daring and resource. But only in two cases out of seven did they succeed in sinking Turkish ships, and it is safe to say that had the Turks kept a proper watch, and run out torpedo-nets to protect their ships, the Russians would not have had even that small measure of success. Besides, there were no quick-firing guns in those days, otherwise the Russian torpedo-boats would not have escaped as they did.

In the little war between France and China in 1884 the French used their torpedoes with cruel effect upon their contemptible foes, and sank three Chinese ships in two attacks. But it was no credit to succeed against such an enemy, and had the most ordinary precautions been adopted, or the commonest skill and courage been displayed by the Chinese, the French torpedo-boats would not have had the ghost of a chance of effecting their purpose.

In the Chilian civil war of 1891, between the Balmaedists and the Congressionalists, the former, with two swift and well-armed torpedo-gunboats, attacked the ironclad *Blanco Encalada* in Caldera Bay and sank her. But here again it was the gross negligence of the captain of the ship attacked which facilitated the disaster. He was accused of being ashore at the time at a banquet. Whether this were so or not, it is certain that no precautions whatever were taken against surprise, and the ship fell an easy prey to the two torpedo-gunboats, which got within a hundred yards of their victim before the alarm was given. As this was the first instance of the successful employment of a Whitehead torpedo in war, it may be interesting to quote some of the details given by Mr H. W. Wilson in his *Ironclads in Action*. He says, 'The *Blanco* was struck on the starboard side, near the dynamo room. The shock was tremendous. Every light in the ship was extinguished, one of the eight-inch guns was thrown off its trunnions, and a large number of men were killed. Portions of iron and machinery flew about in the engine-room, and killed or wounded six engineers. The only one who escaped was carried by the violent rush of water up a ventilator.' Two minutes after she was struck, the *Blanco Encalada* went down with a large hole blown through her bottom, fifteen feet by seven, as measured by the divers; and 182 officers and men out of her crew of 288 perished with her.

Another success was credited to the torpedo in 1894, during the civil war in Brazil

between the supporters of Marshal Peixoto and those of Admiral Mello. The last hope of the latter, when the rest of their fleet had surrendered, rested in the formidable sea-going turret-ship *Aquidaban*, and torpedo-boats were despatched to attack her by night as she lay in the bay of Santa Catherina. They stumbled upon her in the dark by a fluke, and if she had not suddenly lighted up and fired on them, they would never have found her. Unprotected by torpedo-nets and ill-supplied with quick-firing guns, she was so injured by the torpedoes discharged at her that she foundered as soon as her engines started, but all her crew escaped. The odd thing was that the torpedo-boats scuttled away, believing that they had failed, and it was only by accident that they learned next day of their success.

The latest instances of night attack by torpedo-boats are those made by the Japanese upon the remnants of the Chinese fleet, which, after the battle of Yalu, took refuge in the fortified harbour of Wei-hai-Wei. The Japanese had captured most of the land defences before they made their attempt on the ships. The first two attacks failed—the boats were discovered, and had to beat a hasty retreat. The third was more successful; the boats got in unobserved, but the intense cold, ten degrees below zero, clogged the tubes with ice, and so numbed the hands of the men that they could scarcely tell what they were doing. One, however, out of the many torpedoes discharged found its billet and sank the ironclad *Ting-Yuen*. On the next night the torpedo-boats made their final attack. Four Chinese ships were struck by torpedoes; of these one was kept afloat till the next day and then sank, two were disabled but not destroyed, and the fourth, the *Lai-Yuen*, turned turtle. For four days her wretched crew could be heard battering at her sides, and shrieking for help. But they were hermetically sealed up, and before a passage could be cut through the ship's bottom to liberate them they were all dead from suffocation. The injuries to the torpedo-boats were not serious. In the four attacks only one boat was sunk, and the loss of life did not exceed thirty. But this was due to the utter demoralisation of the Chinese and not to any exceptional skill or dash on the part of the Japanese.

There is nothing in any of the instances we have given to alter our fixed opinion that, with proper precautions, a fleet at anchor may be rendered perfectly safe from torpedo attacks by day or night. With nets out, with 'destroyers' patrolling the approaches, with the search-light ready to flash out at the first alarm, with quick-firing guns prepared in an instant to throw a ceaseless hail of projectiles weighing from twelve pounds to eighty pounds, and with smokeless powder, what chance is there for a torpedo attack to succeed? And the admiral or captain who would neglect such precautions in the face of an enemy would deserve to be shot for gross and culpable dereliction of duty.

But whilst we hold that the value of the torpedo in naval warfare has been grotesquely exaggerated, we do not say that it is useless. Torpedo-boats will probably have a part to play in any future war, though not the

prominent part their enthusiastic admirers have assigned them. Mr Wilson thinks that they will be to a fleet what cavalry is to an army. 'It is not likely,' he says, 'that torpedo-boats will be sent against intact battleships whose quick-firers are in good order, and whose gunners are unshaken. The boats' time will come towards the close of the battle, when the fight has left great masses of iron wreckage: when the targets have lost their power of movement: when their crews are diminished in number, and wearied by the intense strain of action.' Then, like swordfish round a dying whale, they will have their huge antagonist at their mercy. But surely this is the time for the 'destroyers' to swoop down upon the torpedo-boats, and scatter them like chaff; and those swift harriers will be unworthy their name if they cannot save a battleship in distress. In any case we predict a bad time for the torpedo-boats.

A HUMAN SOUL.

A WISE man walked by the river,
And the water spirit's sigh
As she yearned for a soul, it moved him,
And he answered thus her cry:

'Can you smile when your heart is aching?
Remember when others forget?
Laugh lightly, while hope is taking
Its final farewell of you; yet
Meet the world, and strive on to the ending
Of life, be it ever so drear;
Firm in faith, without falter, unbending
With never a sigh or a tear.'
'All this I can do,' said she.

'Can you face your life if left lonely,
While another has gained his rest,
And you have the memory only
Of one who was truest and best?
For ever to you the world's brightness
Then passes away for aye;
The sun will grow cold, and no lightness
Can pierce through that darkest day.'
'All this I can do,' said she.

'Can you pause to do deeds of kindness
In the midst of your deepest woe?
For grief, it must not bring blindness
To the trials of others below.
You must ever strive on, and your sorrow,
Though heavy and sore to bear,
Remains till the dawn of that morrow,
When pain it is no more there.'
'All this I can do,' said she.

Made answer the wise man slowly,
'If this be so, and thou
Canst bear grief, yet help the suffering,
Thou hast a soul even now.'

FLORENCE PEACOCK.

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